



Re: Weekly COVID-19 related update from the Director

December 8th, 2020

Dear Students,

This is the sixth weekly update related to your studies at the Ingram School of Nursing (ISoN) in the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This is part of our continuing efforts to provide clarity and transparency in decision-making by ISoN leadership, together with our rationale for the decisions made. These updates can also be found on our website, organized by date [here](#).

In tandem with these updates, I also hold weekly Town Halls, where I receive your questions directly and via your student leaders. If you were unable to attend last week's Town Hall, you may access the recording of it [here](#) with the passcode: **rd1Ns51!**. As planned, this week's Town Hall will take place tomorrow, December 9th from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. EST via [Zoom](#).

Various meetings and the latest updates from key stakeholders inform this week's message. I will cover four issues this week: (1) Update on the WELL Office; (2) Exclusion of ISoN with regards to the delayed start for Winter 2021 classes (3) Update on the Integrated Health and Social Services University Network for West-Central Montreal (CIUSSS CODIM) Directive; and (4) Clinical-placement preferences

I. UPDATE ON THE WELL OFFICE

Since the December 1st Town Hall, we have received updated information from the WELL Office. They want to hear from students and fear that because they couldn't hold their usual orientation session in person due to the COVID-19 pandemic that many students may be unaware of the services they offer. The virtual orientation session is available on the WELL Office website [here](#) and students are encouraged to watch the session for any information they might need.

Information on the WELL Office is included in our ISoN e-newsletter McGill Nursing E-News which is sent to all enrolled students, faculty and staff every Thursday. If you are not receiving this e-newsletter, please reach out to communications.nursing@mcgill.ca to be added to the distribution list without delay.

II. EXCLUSION OF ISoN FROM DELAYED START OF WINTER 2021 CLASSES

While the Provost did confirm with all McGill students, faculty and staff on December 2nd that classes will now begin on Thursday January 7th instead of Monday January 4th, he indicated that this decision applies to all Faculties *except* for the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (which

includes ISoN) and the Faculty of Dentistry. Winter semester start dates remain unchanged for all ISoN courses for the reasons mentioned in earlier updates and Town Halls. We are currently in communication with Enrolment Services in regards to clarifying the add/drop and withdrawal dates for the Winter 2021 term and will reconfirm in a forthcoming message.

III. UPDATE ON THE INTEGRATED HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES UNIVERSITY NETWORK FOR WEST-CENTRAL MONTREAL (CIUSSS CODIM) DIRECTIVE FOR BNI STUDENTS

As referenced in several previous messages and most recently at last week's Town Hall, there has been a directive released by the leadership of the CIUSSS CODIM regarding enlisting BNI (commonly referred to in Quebec as 'DEC-BAC') students to support the healthcare system to a greater extent during this second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our main clinical partners have agreed to wait until after the Fall exam period to request full-time work weeks from students who work in their facilities. We understand that there are a lot of demands being made on our students' time and energy and I'd like to reiterate that ISoN leadership remains vigilant in maintaining our priorities – your health and safety and your academic success.

As I mentioned at the last Town Hall, I have been in contact with the Director of Nursing of the CIUSSS CODIM (which includes the Jewish General Hospital) who was not only receptive to the notion that our students are having difficulties managing studies and being asked to work full time concurrently, but genuinely concerned. The instructions she gave are for students to connect with their Nurse Managers and communicate their scheduling needs. I believe that this is wise advice for all working students, regardless of work site. In addition, as I stated during the Town Hall, those of you who have been scheduled to work additional hours prior to the end of the exam period, please let me know so that I can follow-up accordingly. Although today begins our exam period, if this issue remains relevant for you, please write to my assistant [Irina Cazac](#) with the clinical site, unit, and Nurse Manager name. You may feel that this puts you 'on the spot'; unfortunately I have no way to support you in this situation without these details.

During the Fall semester, ISoN has done its best to: ensure maximum flexibility for course attendance; simplify course delivery as much as possible; and to encourage students who feel they need it, to discuss the option of taking an 'incomplete' (i.e., 'K') with their Course Coordinator.

Some of you may be considering reducing your Winter course load by switching to part-time instead of full-time studies. There are additional mechanisms for flexibility being considered by the University so it may be best to wait before making any changes to your planned Winter semester until these are known.

With regards to having BNI student representation at meetings with our clinical partners in discussions specific to BNI students, I fully support this idea. The challenge is that decision-making meetings in the traditional sense aren't currently taking place due to the speed of changes required by our clinical partners in response to the current wave of COVID-19. Ministerial directives arrive

at any moment with application required sometimes within hours. “Meetings” have been transformed into text messaging. Decisions are made quickly, with the best information at hand at that moment and, based on my many interactions with the Directors of Nursing of the CIUSSS CODIM, CIUSSS ODIM, and the MUHC, with the very best intentions. There may be avenues other than meetings for you to have your views known. I invite you to reach out to ISoN Communications Officer Christina Kozakiewicz at communications.nursing@mcgill.ca regarding any possible options and advice for students wishing to have their voices heard.

IV. CLINICAL-PLACEMENT PREFERENCES

Under normal circumstances, ISoN distributes surveys to students in certain courses to determine their preferences for the type of settings in which they hope to be placed for their clinical internships. While no guarantees can be made, ISoN uses these data to help with decision making when it comes to determining clinical placements. The Clinical Placement Office is looking into the possibility of doing this for certain Winter courses. I will provide an update on reissuing the student-preferences survey in a forthcoming message.

V. VARIA

Resources for students

The Deputy Provost’s December 4th COVID-19 Update to the McGill community included useful resources for students who may be struggling; please find them listed below:

- If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911
- Canada’s 24/7/365 suicide prevention and support hotline number is 1 (833) 456-4566; Quebec’s hotline is 1 (866) 277-3553
- McGill Athletics & Recreation offers [online, on-demand and some limited in-person](#) services available to both students and staff
- [Keep.meSAFE](#) is a 24/7/365 mental health counselling service available to all McGill students
- Student Services has put together some [exam season self-care supports](#)
- Learn how to [access care from the Student Wellness Hub](#)
- For peer-based support, you can reach out to [Nightline](#) or [Chatline](#), or reach out to the [Peer Support Centre for online appointments and drop-ins](#)
- Find [tips to connect better with other students virtually](#)

- International students who have Medavie Blue Cross insurance are covered for online medical consultations and memberships with [Maple Virtual Care](#)

Holiday Events

As mentioned in my previous update, we have also reached out to [Student Services](#) to acquire more information on events (virtual and otherwise) taking place over the holiday period to help with student morale and mental health. We expect to receive a response by the end of this week which we will include in a forthcoming message.

Please do not hesitate to share any concerns or questions you may have with your elected NUS and NGSa representatives, or feel free to send your feedback to me directly through my assistant, Irina Cazac, at directoradmin.nursing@mcgill.ca.

Best regards and stay safe,



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Cc: McGill Dean of Students
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